BASIC SKILLS CLASSES

These five students are enrolled in special classes in the Torrance schools—classes tailored to fit the needs of boys and girls whose natural imitatious make the competition of an ordinary class-room an unsurmountable hurdle. Unlike the ordinary class, these special classes are designed to give special students a place to achieve a sense of accomplishment and to gain confidence in their own abilities. boys and girls whose natural

KNOWN AS basic skills classes, these classes are geared to help youngsters prepare themselves to earn wages and assume the duties and obligations of citizen ship. There are 14 such classes in Torrance elementary schools and 10 more in the

city's high schools. Emphasis in the basic skills program is on concrete appli-cations of knowledge. Where ordinary students solve prob-lems on the basis of certain assumptions, the basic skills students take nothing for granted. They must work out what others will assume.

Because the basic skills of learning are difficult for these students to understand, teachers must spend their time in activities which can time in activities which can give the students an opportunity to experience, with their own eyes and hands, those things others read on the printed page. Through these activities, the students learn to tell left from right, up and down, and front and back, in this way, the students learn the difference between a "b" and a "d" or a "g" and "p".

ANOTHER OF the con-

ANOTHER OF the concepts which these students must learn is that of self. Before he can reach out and know the world around him," anys one basic skills teacher, "he must know himself, he is ready for in and out, up and down, in front of, behind, on top of, and below."

in the same way—experience and practice—the students learn to draw basic shapes — circles, triangles, square, and rectangles. Until these shapes can be drawn, the student can not really learn to read learn to read.

After three or four years In the basic class, these stu-dents will progress to an in-termediate class where they will spend another two or three years. Here, they con-centrate on the concrete ap-plications of their knowledge.

A lesson in cooking will give them an opportunity to apply their lessons in reading, and arithmetic in a way that will yet meaning into that will put their learning.

TEACHING THESE students some of the more ab-strect ideas, government or history, for example, is more difficult. Teachers must emphasize the individual's role in government, not the struc-ture of government, "These students understand the direct experience," says one basic skills teacher.

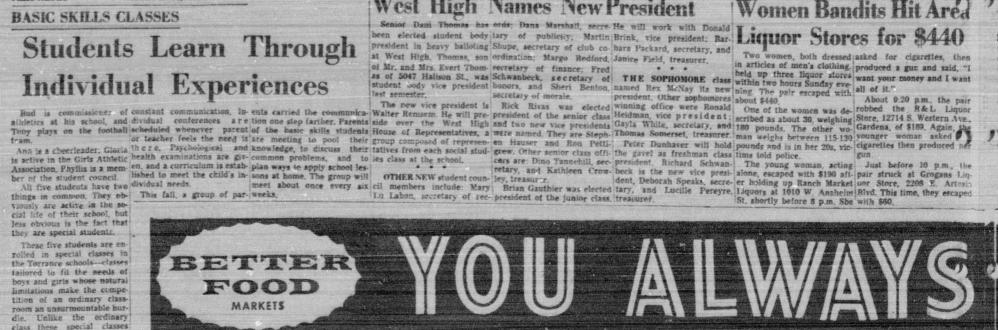
In high school classes, the emphasis continues to be put on the concrete applications on the concrete applications of skills. In these classes, students may learn to work in a shop, to cook, and about safety and health. At this level, the basic skills students are trained to hold jobs, and they frequently hold jobs during these years. One recent graduate worked as a truck driver, while others may do clerical work or mend books for the school district. Employers rate these students as top-notch employers. dents as top-notch employes

BUT WHERE does the school's responsibility end and the parent's job begin? From the moment a child is selected for the basic skills program, parent and teacher, school principal, and the dis-trict's psychologists are in

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